

**TESTIMONY OF JOHNNIE DAILEY
IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 5342**

My name is Johnnie Dailey. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this written testimony in opposition to House Bill 5342.

I have been a victim of housing discrimination, and the discrimination I experienced continues to impact my life three years after it happened. I use a Housing Choice Voucher, also known as Section 8, to house my family. In 2013, I was searching for a new home for my family, including my young niece and grandson. I found a single-family home that would have been perfect for my family. It was on a quiet street where my niece and grandson could play outside, and the rent was less than my current apartment. My real estate agent called the listing agent for the property and told her that I was very interested in renting the property and that I had a Section 8 voucher. The listing agent responded that the owner of the property, a Boston-based company, would not rent to me because they were not interested in accepting a Section 8 voucher.

I was discriminated against and denied the opportunity to rent the property solely because I am someone who uses a Section 8 voucher to pay part of my rent. Prior to being denied the opportunity to rent this property, I had never experienced discrimination before. I work full time as a housekeeper and housekeeping manager at a nursing facility. The property owner's refusal to rent to me based on my lawful source of income made me feel embarrassed that I rely on a Section 8 voucher to help support my family. Anyone who knows me knows that I am a positive person; I love my job because I get to interact with people who appreciate a smile and a word of encouragement. But this experience of discrimination left me feeling badly about myself, and I struggled with depression. My family and I remained in our same apartment on a busy street where my grandson and niece could not play outside. To this day, when I think about the discrimination I experienced, I still feel upset and embarrassed. The experience of being discriminated against

based on my lawful source of income makes me feel anxious about looking for a new apartment to rent because I am afraid I will be discriminated against again by a landlord who does not want to rent to me because I receive assistance from the government.

After the owner of the property refused to rent to me, I called the Connecticut Fair Housing Center for help. Although nothing will take away the pain that I felt and continue to feel as a result of the discrimination, I was able to reach a satisfactory settlement with the property owner, the real estate agency, and the listing agent to compensate me for the emotional distress that I experienced.

In strictly monetary terms, the discrimination I experienced cost me a few thousand dollars in gas money, real estate agent fees, and difference in rent, but the emotional cost was much more. I decided to submit this testimony because I want to do my part to make sure that no one else experiences the kind of discrimination that I did, and that if they do, they are fairly compensated for the emotional distress that they experience. If H.B. 5342 were to pass, then people like me who suffer relatively small economic losses in comparison to great emotional harm would not be fully compensated and would be discouraged from filing housing discrimination complaints at all. Please vote no on this bill. Thank you.